(c) and (d) No, Sir. SEBI has been established on 21st February, 1992 with statutory powers and functions to protect the interests of investors in securities and to promote the development of, and to regulate the securities market. One of the functions of SEBI is regulating the business in Stock Exchanges.

(e) and (f) The effective implementation of various decisions is reviewed by SEBI on a continuous basis and SEBI will intervene if it is found that Stock Exchanges are unwilling to enforce discipline;

M.O.U. Between India and Australia

1464. SYED SIBTEY RAZI:

MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a memorandum of Understanding has been signed by officials of his Ministry and the officials of the AIDAB of Government of Australia on 25th November, 1993.

(b) if so, the details thereof clause-wise;

(c) what are the advantages those are likely to be gained from this M.O.U. in the interests of country; and

(d) if so, details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED): (a) The MOU was signed on 24-11-1993.

(b) to (d) This MOU relates to Australian Development Cooperation Scholarships. The objective of the scheme is to promote Human Resource Development focussing on individual needs in India through support for in-Australia training.

Expert Committee for Integrated Rural Development Programme

1465. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the R.B.I. has recently appointed an Expert Committee to review the Integrated Rural Development Programme; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED): (a) and (b) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently appointed a High Power Expert Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri D. R. Mehta, Deputy Governor to review the progress of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and recommend suitable measures for its improvement. The terms of reference of the Committee are as follows:

(i) To review the present procedure for identification of beneficiaries and suggest changes to ensure proper identification;

(ii) To review the existing system of sponsoring of loan applications;

(iii) To examine the adequacy of forward and backward linkages, the role of Government agencies in ensuring the availability of these linkages to the beneficiaries at the proper time and in adequate measure;

(iv) To examine procedures for sanction of loans by banks and suggest improvements to ensure timely and adequate credit being made available;

(v) To examine causes for poor recovery and suggest measures for improvement in recovery; and

(vi) To examine procedure for disbursement of subsidy under IRDP i.e. switch over from the frontend subsidy to back-end subsidy.

Taxation Law for Partnership Firms

1466. SMT. ILA PANDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the tax proposals in the 1993-94 budget have caused hardship to partnership firms which are obliged to change partnership deeds every year to provide for partners' salaries; and

(b) whether Government are considering to ease the taxation law for partnership firms?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) The Finance Act, 1993 did not introduce any amendments to the Income-tax Act which would make it incumbent for partnership firms to chage partnership deeds every year to provide for partners' salaries.

(b) In view of answer to part (a) of the question reply to this part does not arise.

Negotiation for Another Loan from IMF

1467. SHRIMATI ILA PANDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are negotiating for another loan under the extended fund facility from the IMF; and

(b) the need for a new IMF loan in view of the present comfortable foreign exchange reserve position?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, the Government has held preliminary discussions with the International Monetary Fund for possible assistance under the Extended Fund Facility with a blend of concessional resources under Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility. This assistence will enable us to bridge the exceptional financing gap in our balance of payment over the medium term (1994—97). Although the present exchange reserve position is satisfactory, substantial repayments to IMF are scheduled during the period 1994—96 and the envisaged assistance from the Fund under the extended arrangement provides a cushion against exogenous shocks.

Licence to Times Guaranty

1468. SHRI SURESH KALMADI:

SHRI GOVINDRAO RAMARAO ADIK:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Reserve Bank of India has issued a licence to Time-Guaranty—a division of Bennet Coleman;

(b) whther it is also a fact that Times Guaranty has been accorded preference over several other applicants in the queue; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED): (a) to (c) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have not issued any banking licence to Times Guarantee Financial Ltd. However, M/s. Bennet Coleman & Co. Ltd., which had sought RBI's permission for setting up a new private sector bank, have been given 'in principle' approval. The application received from M/s. Bennet Coleman & Co. is the sixth application on which 'in principle' approval has been given by RBI.